

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

A. Summary of the Amendment

This is a full and timely response to the non-final Office Action dated February 8, 2005. Reexamination and reconsideration are courteously requested. By way of the present amendment, claims 18 to 23 are canceled, after being withdrawn as the result of an earlier restriction requirement. Thus, claims 1 to 17, and 24 remain pending for the Examiner's consideration, with claims 1, 10, and 24 being independent claims.

B. Allowable Subject Matter

The examiner has acknowledged that claims 4, 8, 14, and 16 are directed to allowable subject matter. Applicant thanks the Examiner for a thorough examination of these claims.

C. Restriction Requirement

As mentioned previously, in view of the restriction requirement claims 18 to 23 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer as to their presentation in a divisional application. Thus, the election of the remaining pending claims 1 to 17, and 24 is affirmed.

D. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 to 3, 9 to 13, 17, and 24 are rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,572,445 ("Laursen"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As a preliminary note, it is pointed out that although the Examiner cited U.S.C. § 102(b) as the basis for the rejection, the only paragraph of Section 102 under which the present

rejection may be based is section (e); the Laursen patent was published less than one year before the present application's filing date.

It is respectfully requested that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 be withdrawn ~~since~~ Laursen fails to teach or suggest at least the features in independent claims 1, 10, and 24 of

- a) a plurality of holes that are formed in a platen top surface, and
- b) a plurality of valves, with each valve disposed in (claim 1) or proximate (claims 10, 24) one of the holes.

Laursen discloses holes 105 that are formed in a platen top surface 114. Laursen also discloses valves 106 that control fluid flow into plenums 102. However, the valves 106 are positioned away from the platen 107, and consequently are clearly not disposed in, or even proximate to, the holes 105. Thus, the features set forth in the independent claims are not taught or suggested by Laursen. Consequently, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections of claims 1 to 3, 9 to 13, 17, and 24 are overcome.

E. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 5 to 7, and 15 are rejected as being unpatentable over Laursen in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,503,361 ("Nyui"). These rejections are respectfully traversed for essentially the same reasons previously discussed. Nyui is applied for allegedly disclosing a rotary shaft and a rotary encoder. However, Nyui fails to compensate for the deficiencies inherent in Laursen, namely, a plurality of valves disposed in or proximate holes that are formed in a platen top surface. For at least this reason, it is respectfully requested that the rejections of claims 5 to 7, and 15 be withdrawn.

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H. Conclusion


In view of Applicant's amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that Examiner's objections and rejections have been overcome. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is now in condition for allowance, and such allowance is therefore earnestly requested. Should the Examiner have any questions or wish to further discuss this application, Applicants request that the Examiner contact the Applicants attorneys at the below-listed telephone number.

If for some reason Applicants have not requested a sufficient extension and/or have not paid a sufficient fee for this response and/or for the extension necessary to prevent abandonment on this application, please consider this as a request for an extension for the required time period and/or authorization to charge Deposit Account No. 50-2091 for any fee which may be due.

Respectfully submitted,

INGRASSIA FISHER & LORENZ

Dated: February 25, 2004

By: 
David K. Benson
Reg. No. 42,314
(480) 385-5060